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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

For Turkey, a ten-year negotiation period ahead - Milliyet
Turkey the first Muslim nation to approach EU - Hurriyet
Straw: Entry talks with Turkey will begin in 2005 - Milliyet
Prodi: No future for EU without Turkey - Sabah
Second Bush-Kerry duel tonight - Sabah
Triple attack on Egyptian tourism - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

Tough EU entry talks ahead for Turkey - Radikal
PM Erdogan: This is just a beginning - Radikal
Straw pledges entry talks with Turkey in July - Radikal
FM Gul: Kurds are not a minority in Turkey - Yeni Safak
Oliver Roy: Problem with Turkey the economy, not Islam -
Zaman
Greek Cypriots angry at Verheugen - Radikal
Kerry denies he's supported Armenian 'genocide' cause -
Zaman
US weapons experts invalidate reasons for Iraq's occupation
- Cumhuriyet
Israel kills children deliberately - Yeni Safak
Bombs kill 100, mostly Israelis, in Egypt - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Turkey in wake of EU report: The EU Commission on Wednesday issued a 'qualified' recommendation for the opening of membership negotiations with Turkey. The 25 EU leaders will make a final decision on December 17 about when to launch the talks. Even if accession talks begin, Turkey is not seen joining the EU before 2015. EU outgoing enlargement commissioner Gunther Verheugen said that by rejecting Ankara's bid to join the European bloc, the EU would run the risk that Turkey's democratization would come to an end and would eventually fail. Turkish FM Abdullah Gul voiced hope Thursday at a joint news conference with visiting British FM Jack Straw that a clear and open decision will be taken by EU leaders in December. Straw said he believed that negotiations would start without delay when Luxembourg takes over the EU rotating presidency in January. If not, Straw noted, Britain would do its best to see partnership talks with Ankara begin in the second half of 2005, when London takes the chair. 'This is just the beginning,' PM Erdogan told lawmakers in parliament. 'The EU Commission decision shows that Turkey has passed another threshold,' he said. Some commentators believe that Ankara may still come under pressure for more concessions. Turkey's EU negotiation process will be as difficult as the reforms it has enacted thus far, "Radikal" predicted. The paper pointed to many issues that remain to be tackled, including torture, the right to broadcast in languages other than Turkish, civilian-military relations, and long-awaited reforms for Turkey's religious minorities. Papers also highlight the EU Commission report as describing both Kurds and Alevis in Turkey as 'minorities.' FM Gul said on Thursday that it was 'out of the question' that Kurds and Alevis in Turkey will be given a 'minority' status. "Milliyet" writes that the Commission report has also demanded a retrial for imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Analysts do not anticipate that the EU will expect Ankara to recognize Greek Cyprus or start withdrawing troops ahead of the December decision. But they recall that Ankara will have to sign an EU customs union protocol with the 'Republic of Cyprus.' Greek Cypriots were reportedly annoyed by the EU Commission for not putting in its recommendation envisaging recognition by Ankara of Nicosia or withdrawal of Turkish troops from the divided island. Verheugen had to remind Greek Cypriot diplomats about Nicosia's rejection of the UN-backed blueprint for the reunification of Cyprus, Turkish papers report. 'At this stage, I have no gift to offer the Greek Cypriots,' Verheugen said.

Kerry denies he's supported Armenian genocide claims: The Democratic competitor in the US presidential election, John Kerry, told the conservative/intellectual Turkish daily "Zaman" that he does not plan to recognize the massacre of Armenians by Ottomans as 'genocide,' contrary to some Turkish press reports in early September. Kerry denied he promised in a letter to the Armenian lobby that his administration would recognize April 24 as "Armenian genocide day" in honor of the Armenians killed by Ottoman forces in 1915. 'If elected, I will continue US support for Turkey's full EU membership,' Kerry added.

Barzani due in Ankara: The northern Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masoud Barzani is due in Ankara next week following a long interval, "Cumhuriyet" reports. Barzani will discuss with Ankara the upcoming Iraqi elections and the situation in Kirkuk.

Osman Ocalan Ally Killed by PKK Faction: "Sabah" reports that a close associate of Osman Ocalan, brother of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, was kidnapped in Mosul and later executed by a PKK faction. The man was reportedly abducted earlier this week from a house in Mosul that housed the offices of Osman Ocalan's nascent political party.

Peshmerge attack Turkish truckers: Nine Turkish trucks carrying humanitarian aid to Iraq were attacked around Mosul while en route to Turkey, "Yeni Safak" reports. Truckers said the peshmerge in northern Iraq fired on Turkish trucks, but allowed the passage of Syrian and Iraqi lorries.

Bomb explodes near Istanbul Patriarchate: A sound bomb exploded in the garden of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul early Thursday, causing slight damage to the nearby Hagia Yorgi cathedral. No injuries were reported in the explosion. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeus I said the bombing had been perpetrated by those aiming to block Turkey's EU drive.

Arinc re-elected parliament speaker: Bulent Arinc, current parliamentary speaker and a member of the ruling AK Party, was reelected speaker of Turkey's parliament by a large majority. Arinc received 381 votes in the third round, and will serve a new three-year term.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU-Turkey

"Now it is Time for the Date"
Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in mass appeal-sensational "Posta" (10/8): "The relationship between Turkey and the EU is like a football match. The match began with the opening whistle at the EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999. It was a hard fought match. . The EU Commission report was chalked up as the opening goal, and the first half has ended with Ankara leading 1-0. The second half of the match will be played on December 17, again in Brussels. The opposing side will have different players this time. The 25 heads of state and government will take their places on the field. The second half will be even tougher than before, because many of the players on the other side are committed to eliminating the idea of Turkey's membership in the EU. . The EU Commission gave the green light, but there is still a chance -- albeit a slight one -- that the member countries will forget about their promises on December 17. The main problem lies with the French attitude. . Under current conditions, it appears that there is no other serious opposition at the December 17 summit apart from France. However, France's attitude may also change. In sum, Wednesday was an historic day for Turkey, but much more remains to be done."

EDELMAN